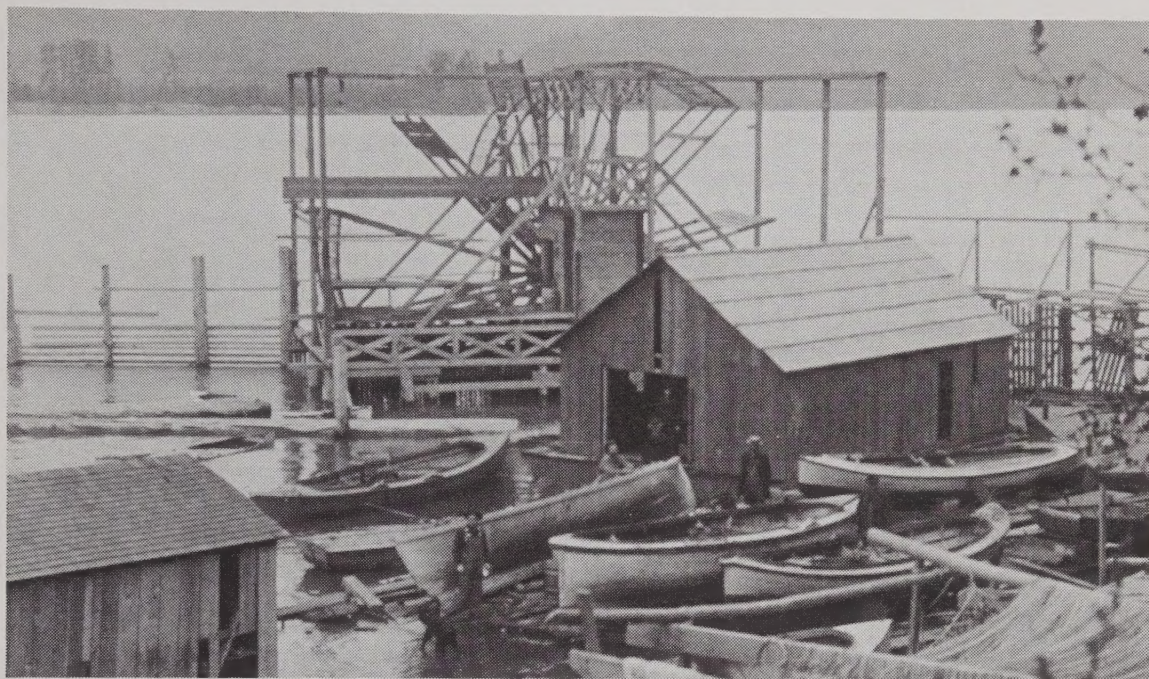


# Columbia River Gillnetter

COLUMBIA RIVER FISHERMEN'S PROTECTIVE UNION

Spring 1993 / Vol. 24, No. 1



## Remembering Columbia River fish wheels

### ■ Suit against salmon fishing won't hold water

A federal judge has ruled that the aluminum companies and public utilities which wanted to stop both sport and commercial salmon fishing on the Columbia River have no standing to sue under the Endangered Species Act.

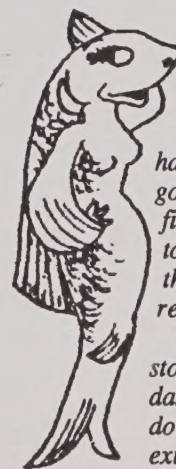
U.S. District Judge Malcolm F. Marsh said the overriding interest of the plaintiffs was preserving electric rates, not in protecting salmon. And it was impossible, Marsh said, for the plaintiffs to show that their rates would go down if salmon fishing was stopped.

"To permit these plaintiffs to proceed with their claims under the Act would be akin to permitting a fox to complain that the chickens have not been fed," Marsh said in an 83-page opinion.

Ten aluminum companies and two large groups of public utility districts filed the suit against the National Marine Fisheries

*Please turn to page 7*

### Sally the Salmon Says...



"Boy, oh boy, numbers of harbor seals and sea lions are going up six percent a year, yet fishermen are still powerless to protect their catches from these predators who are reaching record proportions.

Something must be done to stop or at least control the damage these lovable mammals do. It's not a matter of extinction anymore, it's a matter of survival."



## On deck

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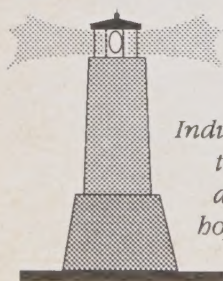
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## FOREWORD

*The Columbia River Gillnetter is the pilot of the Lower Columbia River Commercial Fishing Industry, keeping fishermen and the public in touch with today's important issues. The advertisements which appear make it possible to publish this paper, and we hope you will, in return, patronize and thank the people who support our livelihood.*



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## Designated authority: what good is it?

The 1993 winter chinook season on the lower Columbia was the fourth shortest on record. Only 1976, 1977 and 1980 saw less fishing time than gillnetters had this year.

The listed gillnet catch of 1,593 salmon, except for the one-day season catch of 400 in 1980, was the lowest since 1950. Gillnetters caught just 1,050 Willamette river salmon from a pre-season allocation of more than 8,000.

Just 28 Snake River fish were caught by gillnetters this year, 141 less than the 169 the National Marine Fisheries Service said we could take without endangering the stocks.

During the opening week of fishing February 16-19, the wind chill factor was a chilling 3 degrees below zero with snow on the ground and a water temperature of 34. It was so cold at times the net meshes would freeze together as they came out of the water. We caught one fish the first night, but it came in munched by a seal and was unusable.

Fish don't move in this kind of weather, and the few fish caught were upriver from Longview. Just 606 salmon were landed by gillnetters the first opening.

The next opening of 20 hours was met by blustery 60 mph winds which made the lower river pretty much unfishable. Only 639 fish were caught on the entire river during this period, while the Compact had predicted we'd catch 2,800 by now.

The last 48-hour mini-season, March 3-5, saw gillnetters reel in a scant 248 fish from a Compact prediction of 2,500. As it turned out, mother nature again worked against us, this time with a thick blanket of good old-fashioned fog.

Gillnetters asked for an extension until

March 10, as we had not even begun to approach our allotted quota, but the Compact would have none of it even though it was fully within the law guidelines.

The excuse was a too-high risk factor associated with an opening after a 3-day closure, saying a possible 3,000 gillnetted fish could jeopardize the sport catch and force an early closure.

But based on the Compact's infamous record of predicting catches, there was fat chance of that. Sportsmen ended up fishing the river more than a month longer than gillnetters this year. Sounds fair, doesn't it?

Just during their last week of fishing, anglers caught nearly 1,300 salmon, only 300 less than gillnetters landed the entire season. Sportsmen caught a total of 1,800 fish this year. Not only did they catch more salmon, anglers caught almost twice as many (52) endangered Snake River fish than gillnetters did.

The judgment used this year by the chiefs of the Oregon and Washington departments of fish and wildlife was simply unfathomable,

and it cost the commercial fishing industry thousands of dollars.

Why do two men have all the power?

In Oregon, the governor has appointed seven members to the fish commission, who are supposed to attend the Compact meetings and listen to public testimony before making their decision. This actually used to happen.

Now, the seven Oregon commissioners have designated their authority to the fish department head, and don't even bother to show up anymore. And it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see both Fisher and Turner already know how they're going to vote before they even get to the meeting.

The original idea for the seven Oregon commissioners was to get broad-based input from various parts of the state, not to let one person run the show.

Gillnetters are tired of taking it on the chin, especially when the arguments used against us are just plain ridiculous.

—Don Riswick

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FROM THE  
SECRETARY

What's fair?

Commercial fishing has been an industry on the Columbia River for well over one hundred years.

In fact, when you walk into the State Capitol building in Salem, you see the painted pictures of the fisherman, the farmer and the logger on the right wall. These are the three industries which built the state of Oregon.

Yet as the years have passed into modern times, the people that are making the important decisions for the state are changing that, working toward making Oregon a place for recreation and tourism. But the people who live here year-round and pay taxes to keep the state healthy are finding less working time.

A good example of this is the Columbia River Compact, which sets fishing seasons on the Columbia. They determine if commercial fishermen work or not. There are management guidelines they are supposed to follow, on what amount of fish we should have the opportunity to harvest from each run.

But what's happening is when we catch only about half of what we were given as our share, they pull us off the river and really don't give a good reason why.

The Compact vote is one vote from the Washington Dept. of Fisheries director, and one vote from the seven Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife commissioners who have been appointed by the governor. The last couple of years, however, the commissioners have not attended the Compact meetings, but rather have turned over their voting power to the director, which in turn has one of his staff sit in for him and vote for Oregon.

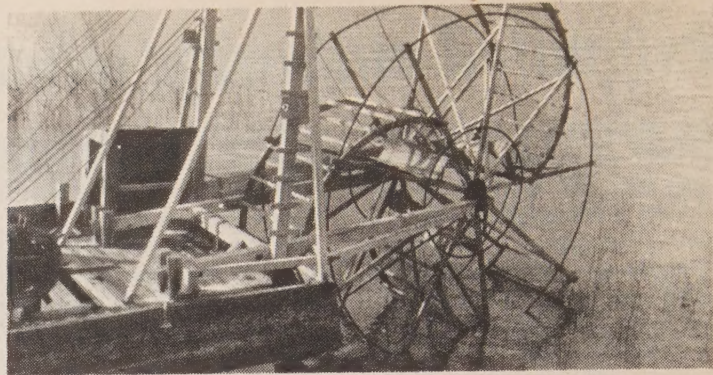
We are not saying we would get a fairer vote from the seven commissioners, but feel it's only fair they at least attend a couple of Compact meetings during the year.

The first Compact meeting of the year, held the last week in January, is the most important one, as it sets the pattern for the rest of the year. With the commissioners absent, we feel they consider our livelihood just not an important enough issue for them to attend.

We understand there are a lot of meetings to attend and it would be hard to attend them all, but try to spread out your interest between play and work.

The commercial fishermen on the Columbia River have always asked and will continue to ask for a fair share. It's a fact, they're not getting it.

—Jack Marincovich



**Remembering fish wheels** — A fish wheel on the Columbia 20 miles east of Portland near Corbett in the year 1910. (also on cover)

*From their first appearance on the Columbia River in the year 1879, fish wheels were a colorful and controversial part of history.*

Fish wheels were first seen in the shad fisheries on the east coast of the United States as early as 1829, on the Roanoke and Pee Dee rivers of the Carolina's.

But they weren't introduced on the Columbia until 1879, when Samuel Wilson built his first fish wheel at the cascades of the river about 14 years after the start of commercial fishing on the Columbia.

From the beginning, fish wheels aroused deep hatred from net fishermen, and sharp jealousies among wheel operators themselves, resulting in some of the greediest and bitterest battles in the history of any fishery.

Columbia River fish wheels were the most ingenious and picturesque devices designed to catch fish. Strategically located in the path of migrating fish, the wheels utilized the swift river current to catch fish and toss them in a holding pen with a minimum of human effort.

The vast power of the river thrusting against the wheel dippers could lift several hundred pounds of salmon free of the wa-

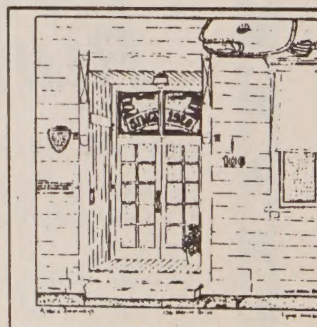
ter, and at times would tear giant sturgeon to pieces when they became jammed within the wheels and its supports.

At the turn of the century there were approximately 75 fish wheels operating on the river, on both the Oregon and Washington sides. Wheel operators were supplied with rifles to fend off seals. Literally hundreds of seals were visible at any one time, and the fish commission estimated one seal could consume 8 to 10 salmon in just a few hours.

But as time passed, controversy grew. The main argument for eliminating the fish wheels was that all fish escaping tide-water should be allowed to proceed upstream to their spawning grounds. It was claimed that the two most prosperous fish wheel families, Seufert and Warren, took 85 percent of the fish caught above tidewater, and that a few wheels took as many fish in just one day as the average gillnet took in four years.

Seufert's wheel #5, the most successful on the river, caught 4,625,776 pounds of salmon in its 31 years of operation. In just one day in May of 1913, #5 caught more than 35 ton of spring salmon.

*Continued on page 30*



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## Historic cannery burns

ASTORIA — An old historic landmark is gone.

Fire raged through the Samuel Elmore cannery January 26, destroying one of only three remaining wooden canneries built on the Astoria waterfront at the turn of the century.

A national historic landmark, Elmore cannery was built sometime between 1896 and 1921. It was one of only a handful of remaining late-19th to early-20th century canneries left in the United States, according to the Society of Industrial Architecture.

Millions of cases of canned Bumble Bee tuna, both yellowfin and albacore, passed through the old wooden walls of the cannery in its day. Huge steel tuna superseiners such as the *Bettie M* and the *Bold Contender* used to unload their catches at the Elmore dock, while friendly tour guides escorted thousands of curious visitors through the cannery over the years.

The plant closed its doors in February 1980 when high labor costs and declining fish counts forced Castle and Cooke, former parent company of Bumble Bee Seafoods, to pick up stakes and move the cannery to foreign shores.

The cause of the fire, which drew more than 60 firefighters from seven Clatsop County departments, was not immediately known.

"Maybe it's the best way for it to go," said John McGowan, former president of Bumble Bee Seafoods. "It sure does mark the passing of an era."

*Related story, page 24*

## Support your Union ...join CRFPU!

One need not look very far to see the dark shadows of picket signs all over the Northwest, and even the entire country.

Now more than ever, Unions are playing a big part in many people's lives, and many of us depend on them to support, organize and strengthen our continued way of life.

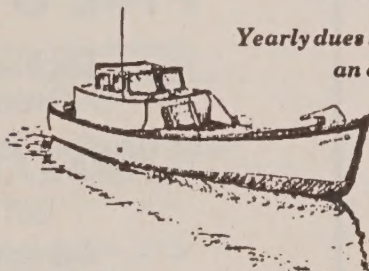
The Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union would like to remind Lower Columbia commercial fishermen that, like many organizations, we depend solely upon annual membership dues to keep us afloat and in touch with the many important issues facing the commercial fishing industry in the 1990s.

We've been making a difference, but now more than ever, it's clear we do need a union that represents fishermen! Things are happening quickly, and we must keep up or we'll surely lose ground.

*Attend meetings — we've been making some waves and we need to continue to be heard!*

Yearly dues to CRFPU are \$150, and include an annual subscription to the *Columbia River Gillnetter*. Use the clip-out on page 30.

*Thank you for your support!*



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## Where do we go from here?

***After a poor winter season, fishermen say measure 8 was just a hollow victory***

Even though Oregon rejected last fall's anti-gillnet ballot measure by a 60/40 percentage, the 1993 winter gillnet season on the lower Columbia River was one most fishermen would just as soon forget.

Gillnetters dipped their nets in the water for the first time in 1993 at noon Tuesday, February 16, for a 3-day run set by the Columbia River Compact, which sets commercial, sport and tribal seasons on the river.

But in an unprecedented move, the Compact pulled gillnet fishermen off the river until further notice at 6 pm Friday, February 19, after they had landed only 561 chinook. At issue was a formal biological opinion which had not been submitted to the National Marine Fisheries

Service. Without the report, the agency told the Compact continuing salmon fisheries were considered to be illegal.

Specifically, the Endangered Species Act requires federal agencies to consult formally, in writing, with the NMFS over any action that is likely to harm a protected fish species. Even though the winter chinook run on the Columbia which, unlike the later spring run, doesn't substantially intermix with threatened Snake River stocks, each state agency, in order to proceed with a set season, must submit a finding of "no jeopardy" to the threatened species in a biological opinion issued by the fisheries service.

"After looking at the impact, it was clear that this fishery is not going to threaten the survival of that run," said Jim Gladson of the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

Once the report was completed nearly ten days later, Gillnetters were allowed

just 68 hours additional fishing time, which concluded Friday, March 5, capping the worst winter chinook harvest on the river since the 1950s.

Sport fishermen, however, were allowed to continue fishing essentially undisturbed until Wednesday, April 7.

"It just really burns me to look out my window and see dozens of sportfishermen fishing, while gillnetters are tied up," said one lower river fisherman.

Gillnet fishermen caught just 28 wild Snake River chinook during the 6-day season, far less than the 169 allowance set by the Compact before the season. Less than 1,600, winter chinook were landed by gillnetters this year, while some 4,700 were caught in 1991.

Unusually cold weather conditions contributed to the poor showing, as did our lovable friends the seals and sea lions, which continue to make landing a whole, intact salmon such an adventure.

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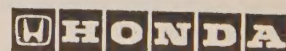
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## Fish lawsuit *continued*

Service and the Department of Commerce, claiming they were not making the correct decisions concerning the endangered stocks of Snake River salmon which are listed on the Endangered Species List.

The plaintiffs, which are all large customers of the Bonneville Power Administration, claim they had paid, through higher electric rates, the lion's share of the \$1 billion the BPA says it's spent in the past 10 years or so in efforts to save salmon runs.

Marsh wrote that the salmon situation is "one of the most complex and multifaceted challenges facing the Pacific Northwest," but said of the plaintiffs, "I find that, like many of the salmon these days, their claims simply cannot survive the journey home."

The plaintiffs had not decided to file an appeal on the decision at presstime.

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# Waves from the past

A colorful history of the Lower Columbia

The netting of fish for food dates to the early times when all races and colors harvested the streams, rivers and oceans.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition traded for salmon from the Indians upon reaching the Oregon River, later named the great Columbia.

Canning was the most feasible method of preserving the salmon for future use and sale. The first salmon canning in the west was done in 1864 by Hapgood, Hume and Co, on the Sacramento River in California. They were originally from Maine where Hapgood had canned lobsters.

Badolett & Co. built and operated the first salmon cannery in Astoria in 1873. By 1877, eleven canneries were operating in Astoria, with over one-thousand sailboats gillnetting for salmon. These early gillnetters were largely seasonal transients from San Francisco. During this time Astoria was second only to the San Francisco Barbary Coast by reputation, and possessed the dubious virtue of having forty saloons and the usual accompaniment of crimps, pimps and women of easy virtue catering to the fishermen, seamen, loggers and unfaithful husbands.

By 1883, the year of the great Astoria fire, salmon packing had reached 629,000 cases valued at \$3 million. Baudyism, mugging, crimping and murder by that time had reached the unbearable point so a committee was formed to bring some semblance of law and order to Astoria. The worst saloonkeepers were forced to leave town. Two ex-Astoria policemen were told to leave town or be hung from City Hall. They left.

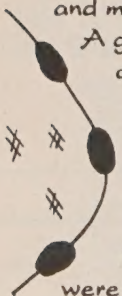
A new breed of fisherman began arriving in Astoria from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. By the year 1900, the principal nationalities were from these countries with a sprinkling of Italians and Austrians. They came to stay, and built substantial and well cared-for homes for their families. They were basically sober, thrifty, working people who gillnetted during the fishing season and then worked as carpenters, construction men, loggers and millworkers during the off-season.

A great number of them knitted their own gillnets during the winter months. Besides reasons of thrift, the hand-knitted net was deemed more efficient than machine-made net, as the handmade knots ran parallel to the length.

In the election year of 1903, there were 179 Finnish, 87 Swedish, 64 Germans and 40 Danish voters at the polls. At a school commission meeting that year the entire population of west Astoria, which was predominantly Finnish, demanded a levy to build a school in their section of town, known as Uniontown.

Following the European trend, by 1899 the Finnish people in Uniontown had built and were operating their own cooperative salmon cannery, the United Finnish Cooperative Packing Co. By 1903, seven canneries were in operation and cold storages and mild cure salteries used a large portion of the salmon catches. Astoria, at that time, was the second-largest city in Oregon.

Several canneries consolidated and formed the Columbia River Packers Association, known locally among fishermen as "the Combine." It is now known as Bumble Bee Seafoods.





Among the fishermen was a character named Johnson, a mediocre fisherman at best, fishing for CRPA. A distinct discrepancy in the amount of salmon received at the cannery and the case output daily indicated scullduggery in the woodpile. Johnson's daily deliveries rose above normal. The night receiver at the cannery became suspect and was watched closely. A plan devised with the cooperation of several trusted fishermen was to place a copper tack in the mouth of each salmon they delivered. The night receiver weighed and recorded the salmon normally.

The next day Johnson delivered a number of salmon marked with a copper tack in its mouth. The receiver had cut a hole in the floor of the station and was dropping salmon to Johnson in his boat under the cannery floor.

Thereafter Johnson became known as "Copper Tack Johnson," and the deluge became too much for him and he left town.

By 1909, power boats were slowly replacing sails. That year 425 boats were motor powered, while 923 still used sails and oars. By the time all boats had motors, a small group of the more daring fishermen fished Peacock Spit. A dangerous game, the floater net would be laid out so the major part of it would drift through the breakers while the boat would remain in deeper water on the edge of the breaker line. If the net worked necessary to drop the buoy, which was a long bamboo pole with a light at the top.

My brothers Charlie and Henry fished the spit, and usually anchored with the other fishermen below North Head. Charlie had a waffle iron and was usually surrounded by hungry fishermen.

Two partners, Nestor Pertulla and Fred Lugnet hung on to the net too long one unusually vicious night and were dragged onto the jetty. The boat was smashed into kindling, the net in rags. The men hung on to the sharp jetty rocks all night, pounded by the surf, until rescued by the North Head lifeboat crew next morning.

The West Astoria of my time had numerous fishermen that seasonally fished for salmon and lived a life of leisure the balance of the year. Bachelors all, they lived in the numerous boarding houses, then common and now extinct

Please turn to page 34



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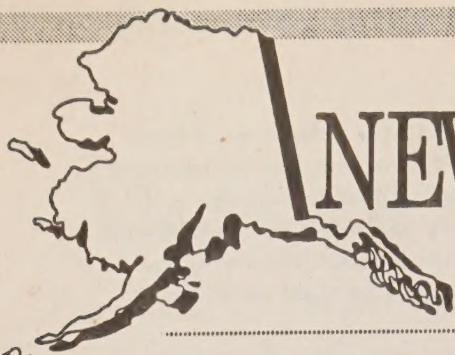
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# NEWS from the NORTH

## Bristol Bay '93 won't be copy of last year

It's always an exciting year on Alaska's Bristol Bay, and 1993 promises to carry on the tradition.

Both the University of Washington Fisheries Research Institute and the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game predict some 43 million red salmon will make their way back through the icy waters of the Bering Sea to Bristol Bay this year, about the same number as in 1992.

Like last year, the ultra-aggressive Egegik district will take the lion's share of the catch, estimated at about 16 million sockeye. In 1992, Egegik fishermen netted some 15.7 million salmon, nearly half of the '92 total Bristol Bay catch of 32 million fish. This summer's total bay catch is expected to be as good or better than last year.

In the also popular Naknek/Kvichak district, fishermen should look for a catch of about 7 million fish, slightly less than the 9.3 million caught in 1992.

The Ugashik district should do better than last year, with a predicted catch of 4.6 million sockeye. Fishermen in this relatively small district netted some 3.4 million reds in 1992.

Nushagak fishermen can expect an improvement this year as well — nearly 4 million salmon are expected to be caught in this district. Three million were landed last year.

There may be lots of fish, but Bristol Bay gillnetters may not get as much for their prized salmon when the prices are put on the table this June. Most fishermen received \$1 per pound in 1992, up from the 70 cents paid in 1991, a strike year most bay fishermen would just as soon forget.

"We don't want another one like that year," said one. "I just don't know what the guys'll do if the processors come out with 50-60 cents again."

Last year, however, was a banner year for Alaska sockeye and pink production — it

was the second most valuable salmon catch ever for the state as a whole, while the Bristol Bay catch was the third highest in history. But add foreign competition, farmed fish and Japan's economic state to the mix and fishermen could well be facing a 10 to 20 percent drop in per-pound prices, industry analysts say.

Some processors who paid \$1.75 a pound last year are reportedly having difficulty breaking even on their winter sales.

"We're trying not to panic, but there are a lot of people who don't need our fish at the prices we need to get for them," says Bob Waldrop of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, who characterizes the economic situation in Japan, the principal buyer of Bristol Bay sockeye, as "a full lemming-style panic."

"I wouldn't want to be a fisherman next year. It looks ugly, and I don't know what we can do about it as an industry," Waldrop adds.

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## Alaska hatcheries: friends or foes?



**FAIRBANKS** — A worldwide excess of salmon and low fish prices have prompted University of Alaska Fairbanks economists to recommend the state scale back funding to pink salmon hatcheries.

In a cost-benefit study, UAF economists compared state funding of state-run and private non-profit salmon hatcheries with revenues of fishermen. The study recommends the state scale back funding to Alaska pink salmon hatcheries, a move that might reduce world salmon supplies and push up prices paid to fishermen.

"It basically says that some hatcheries may no longer be a wise investment of state money," said Mark Herrmann, a resource economist at the UAF School of Management Fisheries Economics Center, and an author of the study. "The state is pumping millions more into the enhancement program than fishermen make in net profits from those fish."

Private non-profit aquaculture corporations operate 25 hatcheries in Alaska, and produce nearly one-quarter of the fish harvested in the state's commercial fisheries. Since the salmon enhancement program began in 1972, Alaska has provided \$71 million in loans and \$12 million in grants to private non-profit hatcheries. The loans remain largely unpaid in part because of a six-year grace period extended to help hatcheries become self-sufficient. The state also has spent more than \$210 million to operate its own 12 hatcheries during the last two decades.

But in recent years, Alaska hatcheries have produced record returns of salmon, especially pink salmon. The production has contributed to huge worldwide salmon surpluses, at a time when fierce competition from foreign salmon farmers have eroded Alaska markets and sent prices paid to fishermen in a tailspin. Increased salmon production expected from Russia may have additional negative effects on the value of Alaska salmon exports, Herrmann said.

According to Herrmann, eliminating state funding of pink salmon hatcheries would save the state money while helping to shore-up salmon prices. About \$147 million would be saved over the next 30 years in the form of reduced hatchery costs and increased net revenues to fishermen.

"If that extra production were eliminated, we believe prices would start to go back up and fishermen would earn more," said Herrmann.

But the study also found important regional differences in how fishermen would

be affected by state cuts to enhancement programs. If pink salmon production were eliminated throughout the state, Prince William Sound fishermen, who depend on hatchery salmon for much of their catch, would lose \$114 million in net revenues over the next 30 years.

By contrast, eliminating hatchery pink production in Alaska would benefit fishermen in Southeast, where stocks are mostly wild.

"There's a lot this study didn't consider," said Heather McCarty of the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation, the state's largest producer of hatchery salmon. She says the study did not examine the effect a planned domestic marketing program would have on prices, or the effect new salmon products would have on markets.

Nor did the study foresee Tyson Foods' entry into the seafood industry. Tyson, a major chicken producer, recently announced plans to aggressively market Alaska salmon in the USA.

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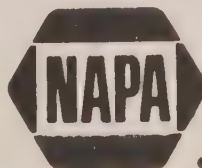
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## Exxon tanker nearly collides with rock in narrows

VALDEZ — A loaded Exxon oil tanker with steering problems lost control in Prince William Sound this winter and had a near miss with middle Rock.

"A tanker is usually 400 yards off the rock," said Coast Guard spokesman William Boatman. The Exxon Kenai, under lease to BP Petroleum, passed within some 100 yards of the rock, he said.

Escort tug Sea Voyager pushed the tanker from its collision course with just minutes to spare. The Kenai had taken on more than 35 million gallons of North Slope crude at the Valdez oil terminal, the largest in the USA.

Meanwhile, scientists say that the 11

million gallons of oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez will have lasting effects on wildlife and fisheries in the area, even though, at first glance, life seems to have returned to normal on Prince William Sound. To find lasting evidence, you have to look closer.

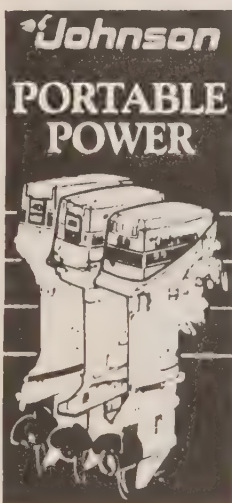
"Measurable injury did occur to marine mammals, birds, fish and shellfish," says Chuck Meacham, deputy commissioner of the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game. "For some species, recovery will take years."

Harbor seals, declining since before the spill, continue to disappear. Eighty percent of adult harbor seals in the path of the slick became oiled, as did many of the pups born

in the months immediately after the spill.

Wild pink salmon, harlequin ducks, herring and common murrens all are having trouble reproducing. Scientists say oiled intertidal areas, sterility and genetic defects caused by the spill are to blame.

Herring, an important food to seals and the lifeblood of a multi-million dollar commercial fishery, suffer continuing effects of oil-contaminated spawning grounds. Eggs laid near shore kelp beds just after the spill were wiped out. Last year, when 4-year-old herring attempted to spawn, less than half the eggs hatched. Scientists worry that genetic changes could slow recovery of the sound's commercially valuable and ecologi-



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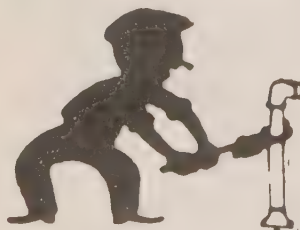
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## It's official: power council says no leaseback for '93

Lower Columbia Gillnetters won't be compensated again this year for not fishing for salmon this fall under a proposed "leaseback" program which has fallen through.

At a recent progress review of the Northwest Power Planning Council's salmon recovery plan in Portland, biologists said the leaseback plan would have brought back some 40 to 50 endangered Snake River salmon, when only a handful return now.

Under the plan, the Bonneville Power Administration would have paid about \$5.5 million, based on average catches over the past five seasons, to some 850 gillnetters who chose not to participate in their annual fall chinook harvest on the Columbia.

But Ted Strong, executive director of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, said Indian tribes refused to go along with a recovery plan that would save adult fish, only to have their offspring chewed up at dams on their way to the ocean in the spring.

Strong and other tribal leaders have long called for changes in hydroelectric dam operations, whose giant turbines kill the vast majority of the fish as they try to make their way to the Pacific.

But gillnetters see the abandonment of the leaseback plan as a major blow to the industry as a whole, and blame Columbia River tribes for its demise. "Sure, what they say may make some biological sense, but it does nothing to compensate a fledgling industry which needs help now," said one gillnetter.

## Let's talk about Snag Pulling

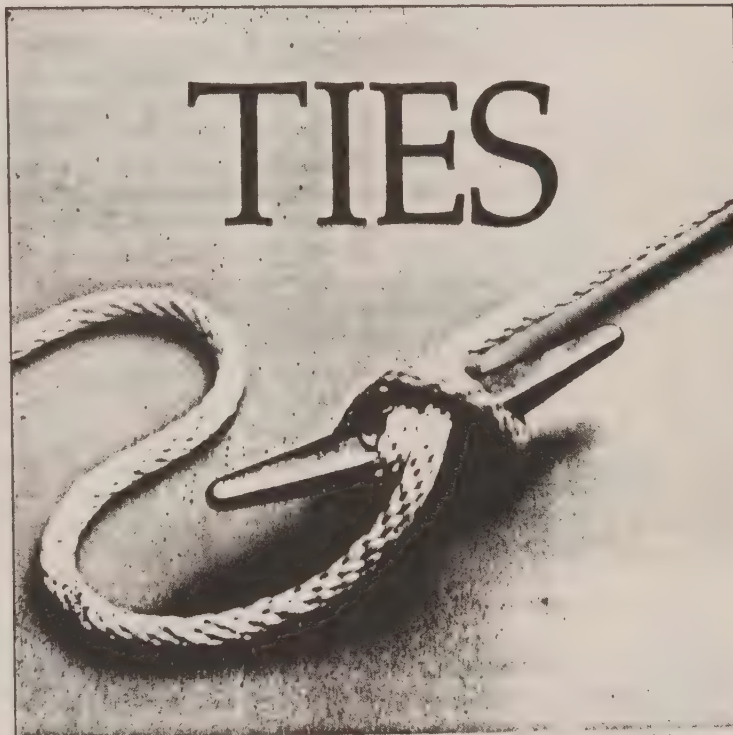
Many Columbia River fishermen are enjoying fishing in waters free of snags. The waters are clear because a few fishermen, usually the same, have taken the time to remove the snags to reduce gear damage.

We hire divers, make new snag nets, and apply to the state for snag permits. We also have set up a Lower River Snag fund at the Astoria First Interstate Bank, under the signatures of Phil Johnson and Don Riswick. We ask fishermen from Tongue Point to the bar to pay \$50 per year in dues, tax deductible.

It is unfair for a few fishermen to shoulder the responsibility of keeping the lower river clear of snags, and our program cannot continue without your help. Many fishermen have never been out snagging, so here's a chance to contribute.

On page 30 is a special clipout to send in your dues. Don't put it off any longer — join the "snag club" today.

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# Pacific Whiting: from hake to riches

On a sunny morning in late September, two crew members of the trawler docked at the Point Adams Packing Company in Warrenton unloaded a catch of Pacific Whiting, commonly known as hake.

While a strong ebb tide swirled around the vessel and seabirds hovered nearby, a large vacuum hose pumped 80,000 pounds of whiting from the trawler and carried it through a connecting pipe to the processing plant a quarter mile away.

Inside the plant, filleting machines whisked the resulting fillets by conveyor belt to machines that remove the skin. From there, the fillets journeyed through a series of shiny, stainless steel machines that ground up, washed, pressed and refined the flesh into surimi, a bland paste-like substance that could be mistaken for mashed potatoes if you were anywhere but in a fish plant.

"Welcome to Oregon's new Pacific whiting fishery," said Michael Morrissey, a food scientist and director of OSU's Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station Seafood Laboratory in Astoria.

Morrissey and his colleague Gil Sylvia, an Experiment Station economist at the OSU Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport, have become experts on whiting and surimi made from whiting as part of a cooperative effort by industry, government and the university.

Their research and the work of others from the Oregon Sea Grant Program, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the Oregon Department of Economic Devel-

opment, the Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association and private consultants have made Pacific whiting this year's wonder fish on the Oregon Coast.

Consider what happened in 1992. Two fish processors in Newport, in addition to the Point Adams plant near the mouth of the Columbia River, invested millions in surimi manufacturing equipment. A new

**"Economic benefits to the coastal economy from the whiting industry are estimated at \$30-50 million a year..."**

\$4 million plant opened in Newport to turn whiting and other seafood waste into fish meal.

Just a year before, these developments would have been unimaginable. Then, no seafood plant in Oregon was capable of making surimi. Processors and coastal officials were trying to figure out what to do with the seafood waste that would be generated if whiting processing actually became a reality.

Investment in 1992 wasn't limited to processors. More than 30 trawlers were modified — at a cost up to \$250,000 each to bring whiting to port.

Economic benefits to the coastal economy from the whiting industry are estimated at \$30-50 million a year.

"Because it's harvested in such large volumes and can be sold in so many different product forms, whiting has thrust

the Oregon seafood industry into the global marketplace. By historical standards, the quantity of fish coming ashore is much larger than Oregon has ever experienced and more than the regional market can absorb," said Sylvia, whose comprehensive study of whiting markets provided information about the economic potential of this silvery-gray groundfish.

Most U.S. consumers remain unfamiliar with whiting products, even though they may have consumed them as breaded fish sticks or imitation crab. Whiting marketed under its own name has not had widespread acceptance in the American marketplace until recently. Whiting is a popular seafood item in eastern and western Europe, Russia and the Third World.

Although the fishing industry has had its eye on the vast whiting resource for a long time, it wasn't until the late 1980s that the industry, headed by Barry Fisher of Newport, convinced the Oregon legislature to fund a study that would lead to a shore-based whiting fishery.

"Leaders in Oregon's fishing industry knew they had a narrow window of opportunity. If shore-based vessels and processing plants failed to take advantage of it, catcher-processors from Seattle and Alaska would harvest the resource, and any possibility of onshore processing and its economic benefits would be lost," Sylvia said.

The loss would have involved more than jobs on fishing boats and in seafood

*Continued on page 27*



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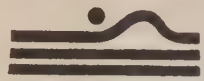
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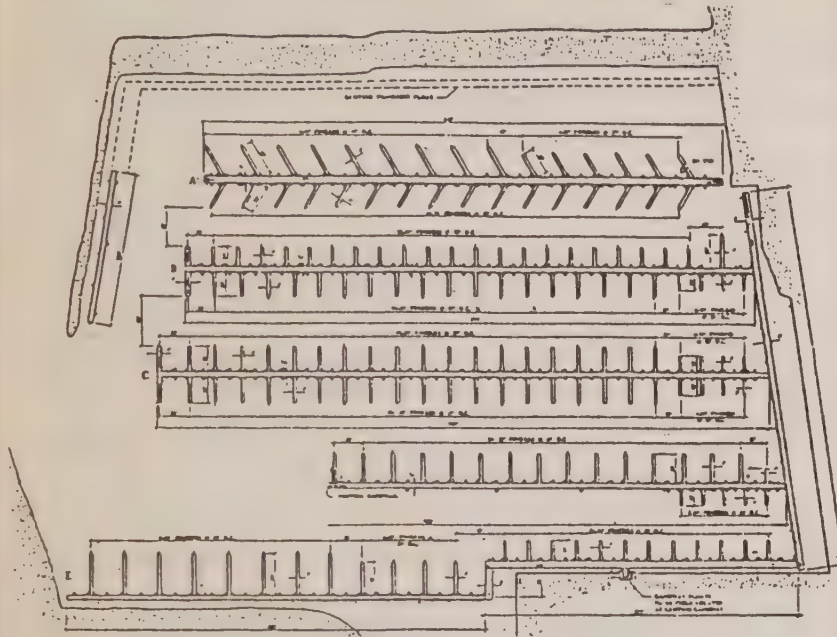
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Construction of a new shoreside restroom facility at the East End Mooring Basin is complete, with additional parking and boat ramp improvements planned for later this year.

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## Tribes call for more enhancement in Columbia Basin

Although the U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty's complex agreements have been successful and effective in some ways, the Columbia River tribes still seek to realize its full promise.

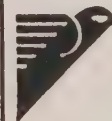
While some salmon species have prospered under the treaty, especially in Alaska and Canada, many upper Columbia River salmon have continued to decline. To help reverse this downward slide and implement the treaty's goal of rebuilding naturally-spawning chinook by 1998, the tribes and states will be seeking further reductions in Canada's ocean harvest of U.S.-produced coho and chinook.

These sought-after reductions will be part of the negotiations leading up to the annual Pacific Salmon Commission meeting this spring. The Pacific Salmon Treaty, which was signed in 1985, created PSC as a forum to discuss periodic adjustments to the catch agreements. Such ongoing negotiations are part of meeting the treaty's purposes: to control intercepting ocean harvests and to allow each country to enhance its respective salmon resources without fear that the other country would reap the benefits.

An integral part of the talks will be a review of the treaty's coastwide chinook rebuilding program. The need for chinook rebuilding was a driving force behind both countries' willingness to ratify the treaty, but the program has not been as effective as originally hoped.

In the past, Alaska and Canada have resisted additional harvest limits even though restrictions protect weak salmon stocks. In fact, PSC members often cannot agree on such issues as catch accountability.

*Please turn to page 22*



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## John M. Gizdavich

1909-1993

Lifelong north coast resident John Marion Gizdavich, Seaside, passed away January 26, 1993. He was 83.

Mr. Gizdavich was born in Clifton August 14, 1909, the son of Marco and Anna Radich Gizdavich.

Mr. Gizdavich was a commercial fisherman on the Columbia River for many years. He worked for Bumble Bee Seafoods and eventually became vice president in charge of international affairs. He retired in 1975.

He married Agnes Ward in 1965 and moved to Seaside. She survives.

He was a seasoned world traveler and lived several years in Hawaii and Japan. He was an avid golfer and bird hunter, and enjoyed cruising the river in his classic "double-ender" gillnetter.

Surviving besides his wife are three sons, Ronald Gizdavich of Port Townsend, Wash., Josh Gizdavich, Seaside, and Mark Gizdavich, Gearhart; two daughters, Jolene Pinkney and Flo Mason of Camas, Wash.; two stepsons, Mike Ward, Warrenton, and Needham Ward of Tacoma, Wash.; a stepdaughter, Sue Lee of Lafayette, Calif.; a sister, Amanda Jacobsen, Portland; 27 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

## Raymond Jolma

1914-1993

Retired gillnetter Raymond "Ray" Jolma passed away April 14 in Longview, Wash. He was 78.

Mr. Jolma was born in Clatskanie November 17, 1914, the son of Jacob and Tyne Paatalo Jolma.

He began commercial fishing on the river when he was just 14, in 1928. He retired in 1981. Mr. Jolma was a member of the Clatskanie United Methodist Church.

Mr. Jolma married Anne Manninen on September 5, 1933, in Kelso. She survives. Also surviving are two sons, Robert Jolma of Clatskanie and Ronald Jolma, Corvallis; a daughter, Beverly Everest, Weaverville, California; two brothers, Ben Jolma of Clatskanie and Kenneth Jolma of Dayton, and five grandchildren.

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## Elmer F. Ranta

1925-1993

Elmer Fred Ranta, a lifetime citizen of the Astoria area, passed away January 16, 1993 in Astoria at the age of 67.

Mr. Ranta was born July 19, 1925, in Astoria, the son of Fred and Maggie Ranta. He attended Astoria schools.

A longtime Columbia River gillnetter, Mr. Ranta also served during World War II. He was a member of Clatsop Post 12 American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Surviving are a niece, Sandra Martin of Salem; a sister-in-law, Carmel Ranta, Astoria; and a brother-in-law, John Kemmerer of Astoria.

## Bruce Sample

1931-1993

A lifelong resident of Astoria, Bruce Sample passed away February 28 in Astoria. He was 61.

Born to Claire and Alice Sample March 24, 1931 in Astoria, Mr. Sample graduated from Astoria High School in 1949. He served in the U.S. Army, and worked as a drag fisherman and at the Pillsbury Flour Mill. He had worked at Astoria Marine Supply for some 30 years.

Surviving are a cousin, Ted Langdon of Astoria, and many close friends and associates.

## Good luck Alaska fishermen!



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## Jack S. Marincovich

1908-1993

Longtime Knappa-area resident Jack S. Marincovich passed away at his home February 25, 1993. He was 84.

Mr. Marincovich was born in Clifton August 8, 1908, the son of Jack and Winifred Kuljis Marincovich. He attended schools in the Clifton/Knappa area, including the old Clifton School.

Mr. Marincovich was a lifelong commercial fisherman on the Columbia River for many years, as well as Alaska. He also worked as a fish buyer for the Columbia River Packers Association, and fished seasonally in Ecuador and Chile for 20 years. He returned to Oregon and gillnetted on the Columbia for another 10 years before retiring.

He enjoyed game and duck hunting, as well as gardening.

Mr. Marincovich married Pauline Stauffer in Astoria in January 1940. She survives.

Also surviving are a son and daughter-in-law, Jim and Chris Marincovich of Phoenix; a brother Andrew Marincovich of Clifton; two sisters, Jacobena Millitch of San Pedro, Calif., and Katie, St. Louis, Mo.; two grandchildren, Angie and Geoff Marincovich of Phoenix and several nieces and nephews.

## Gus E. Ostling

1912-1993

A Cathlamet resident for some 73 years, Gus E. Ostling passed away on February 19, 1993 at his home.

Mr. Ostling was born in Portland January 3, 1912 to Gustaf and Mathilda Ostling, and moved to Wahkiakum County when he was 8 years old.

Mr. Ostling worked as a commercial fisherman on the Columbia River for many years, and was also a county road superintendent for some 17 years until his retirement in 1975.

He was a member of the Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union and the Longview Eagles, as well as past member of the Moose Lodge. He enjoyed yardwork and spending time with his family.

His wife Edna, who passed away in 1991, as well as a brother Elmer, preceded him in death.

Surviving are a son, Fred Ostling of St. Helens; a daughter, Goldie Hegstad of Longview; a brother, Antone Ostling of Puget Island; five grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, several nieces and nephews as well as several relatives living in Sweden.



## Harold Viuhkola

1908-1992

Lifelong Clatskanie-area resident Harold H. Viuhkola, 84, died at his home October 14, 1992.

Mr. Viuhkola was born Oct. 8, 1908, in Ingles, Oregon, the son of Hans and Ida Mae Hendrickson Viuhkola. He attended Clatskanie schools.

A commercial fisherman on the Columbia and Alaska since he was 16, Mr. Viuhkola retired in 1981. He was a member of the Columbia River Fishermen's Union.

Surviving are his wife, Ellen Viuhkola of Clatskanie; two daughters, Lois Peters of Salem and Barbara Woody of Sweet Home; two sisters, Mabel Niemela and Florence Luxford of Clatskanie; six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

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## Salmon recovery: Is there political will? by Bob Eaton

Recovery of salmon stocks listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has begun, or has it? Plans have been laid, tasks assigned throughout the region to organizations like ODF&W, WDF, BPA, BOR, the Corps, the Tribes, the utilities, and others. The list is over twenty pages long and includes categories of habitat, downstream passage, harvest, flows, irrigation screening and modification... the list goes on.

The plan has been constructed by the Northwest Power Planning Council (NPPC) in its effort to bring about a voluntary, regionally approved plan for recovery. The goal is to keep recovery decision making here in the Northwest region.... out of Congress and out of the courts.

The key word to date has been VOLUNTARY. You see, NPPC has no authority to make any organization or agency do what it has agreed to do in the plan. Nothing about recovery becomes MANDATORY until the NMFS adopts the federal recovery plan. NMFS has the option to adopt all, part or none of the NPPC plan as it attempts to fashion a recovery effort for Snake River spring/summer chinook, sockeye, and fall chinook stocks. The NMFS plan for sockeye recovery (with spill-over elements for the other stocks) is due out this summer. But back to the VOLUNTARY concept.

Lower river commercial fishermen felt the brunt when it was determined that lower river commercial license leaseback was not to be included in the 1993 ocean/in-river agreement. The industry, led by a committee of gillnetters and processors under Salmon for All's banner, had done its homework. Leaseback was supported by NMFS, BPA, NPPC, the Governor's of Oregon and Washington and their fishery departments. Supporters also included Congressional leaders Hatfield, Unsoeld, Furse and Kopetski. Some would say an unprecedented show of support, particularly since no one was forced through mandatory requirements to take part.

Enter the VOLUNTARY syndrome. The Tribal leaders did not feel they could support the program. Among their concerns were that some tribal fishermen might be dislocated; that other, in their view, more important aspects of recovery were not being funded; and that any pass through by the tribes of fish purchased by BPA in a lower river lease program might be construed as adversely affecting their tribal fishing rights. They exercised their right not to participate by indicating if leaseback was included in the agreement, they would not sign it.

The states chose not to exercise their options to pressure tribal acceptance of the program. In fact, Bob Turner, WDF Director, stated his two concerns with the leaseback: dollars for leaseback should not come from the limited BPA Fish and Wildlife budget because there were higher priorities than "putting six million dollars in the gillnetters' pockets"; and he did not want to jeopardize the state's relationship with the tribes (by forcing them to cooperate).

Several observations can be made:

1) The states had the opportunity to support their non-tribal fishery. Leaseback had support. The states have authority and obligation to do with their 50% of the harvestable what they want. They could have maintained their ground, supporting the lower river fishery and fish conservation at the same time. They didn't.

2) The recovery plan cannot survive if it is going to be selectively implemented. The fish most likely will not survive either. Will the NMFS mandatory plan be implemented selectively? The answer is probably "no". Those who do not want to comply with their part of the NMFS recovery plan will go to court to seek relief.

Remember, the biggest players in this unfolding environmental drama have the most to lose if they are required to modify their operations to accom-

modate safer passage of migrating fish. They will make "cooperation noises" but their interests are better served by putting off implementation as long as possible... even if that means spending millions in court costs.

3) WDF receives funds from BPA for the squawfish eradication program and the increased enforcement program, neither of which has any demonstrable or immediate effect at providing more fish back to the spawning grounds. Perhaps it is only the public agencies that can justify taking BPA money for their own programs and staff.

4) Leaseback offers fishing families their only chance at mitigating losses associated with salmon recovery. Other recovery elements associated with harvest such as lower river enhancement, development of terminal fisheries, development of alternative harvest methods to improve selectivity, are all going to take time for the rewards to be felt, or are going to negatively impact the financial well-being of the fishing family.

In some ways, implementation of leaseback was a test to learn if fishing families and the industry were going to be treated with respect and dignity in the salmon recovery process. To see if their concerns were to be recognized and their losses compensated. They got the respect...they didn't get the money. They got the shaft.

The Northwest is at a crossroads in its salmon management. Voluntary recovery programs are only going to work if the region steps forward with determination and vision, and requires the federal government, which runs the Columbia and Snake Rivers, to do the job necessary to recover lost runs of fish. Based on the gillnetters' experience to date, that vital political will does not exist in this voluntary phase of recovery. We can only hope it surfaces when the plan becomes mandatory.

*Bob Eaton is Executive Director of Salmon for All*

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## Fisheries department will feel budget pinch

**Ten game enforcement officers will be lost unless an angling license increase is approved by the legislature**

Biting the bullet called Measure 5, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department has been told by Gov. Barbara Roberts to trim its 1993-95 budget to 90 percent of the 1991-93 budget of \$155 million.

The budget proposal, headed for the Oregon legislature, is actually \$156 million, as the department has been told it can budget 100 percent of its federal funding and can build in an 8 percent inflation factor.

Rod Ingram, legislative liaison and former wildlife division chief, says as many as 125 positions could ultimately be cut from the department's staff of more than 1,000 if the governor's orders are carried out. Many positions have already been trimmed, he said.

"This is our proposal," Ingram said. "The legislature can, and probably will, make some changes."

Ten game enforcement officers with the Oregon State Police will also be lost, although seven could be reinstated if a proposed angling license fee increase (\$2 more for residents, \$4 for non-resident annual) is approved.

A new \$5 resident shellfish license, which covers clamming and crabbing, is also planned. It will include funding for the administration of testing programs for shellfish toxicity, a growing problem on Pacific beaches.

But even with the license increases and the new shellfish license, the department

will close two fish hatcheries, the Willamette Trout Hatchery at Oakridge near Eugene and the Trask River Salmon Hatchery near Tillamook.

The closures may not sit too well with Oregon voters, however, and legislators may be reluctant to implement them. The growing spring chinook run on Tilla-

mook Bay is largely dependent upon the Trask River hatchery, while the popular Tillamook Bay fall chinook sport fishery, although comprised of mostly wild salmon stocks, is also augmented by the hatchery.

"There are some major decisions to make on funding," Ingram said.

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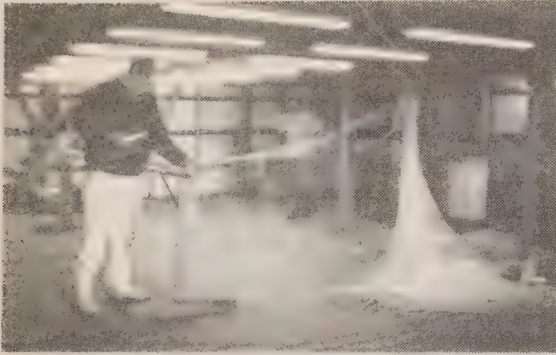
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*Net mender Arnold Johnson with Mark Laukkanen at the downstairs net loft at Welcome Slough station near Cathlamet, Washington.*

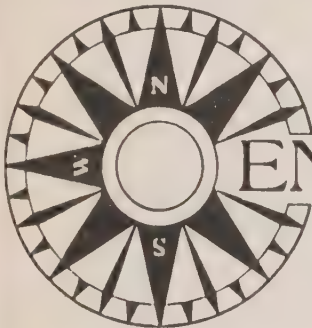
## **Ramblings from District 5** by Mark Laukkanen

The smelt arrived in early February with gillnetting followed by dragging. No one is getting rich but a lot of effort is going into catching them. Smelt went into Skamokawa Creek but backed out the next day.

The upstairs net loft has been expanded at Welcome Slough station. Due to deep floaters, more space to spread out was needed, so space used for storage was converted to net repair area.

Drift captains: remember that shackle of new gear you wiped out on that stump, and you swore over your Norwegian snag god that it was the last net you were going to donate to that snag? Well it's time to schedule spring snagging to clean up your drift. The weather is warmer, and divers aren't busy in April and May so good morning tides are available. If you wait until you get back from Alaska, half the drift members are either on vacation, in the Sound fishing or in Willapa. Let's do it now! If not, you better order more web, as the snag always takes the new end!

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## Scientists defend plan to barge salmon

Although scientists are defending the 20-year-old practice, conservation groups are strongly opposing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' annual plan of barging salmon around Columbia River dams, and are threatening to sue if needed permits are granted.

"I think most people who are opposed don't feel it's a substitute for natural in-river migration," says John McKern, chief fisheries manager for the corps. "But the problem is there's no way to do that right now, so we feel that transportation appears to be the best alternative at this time supported by the scientific information that's available," he adds.

Beginning this spring, the corps will collect young salmon at four upriver dams, then transport them by barge or truck to just below Bonneville Dam, where they'll be released into the river. The dams include the Lower Granite, Little Goose and Lower Monumental on the upper Snake River and the McNary on the Columbia.

But the Oregon Natural Resources Council, seemingly involved in many fish disagreements, has told the National Marine Fisheries Service that it will sue if it grants the permit to transport the salmon. The group says that not enough adult fish ever return to spawn upriver.

This year, the corps plans to transport some 20 million 1- to 2-year-old fish downriver at a cost of about \$2.5 million. The young fish, which range in length from 1.5 inches to more than a foot, are routed away from deadly dam turbines with screens, then funneled through a pipe or flume onto a barge or truck.

The barges hold up to 1 million fish for

the two-day trip downriver. Once below Bonneville, the fish are held for two more days for acclimation, then released.

Nearly all the fish survive the trip, McKern says, while half of those who venture downriver on their own will die. Some .5 to 2 percent of the transported fish will return as adults.

A recent report by state, federal and tribal fishery scientists which discredited the barging practice, stating it violated the Endangered Species Act, was denounced by fisheries scientists as incomplete and unscientific.

Conservation groups say they would rather see increased water flows through reservoir drawdowns and spilling water over the dams rather than through turbines when young fish are migrating.

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### enhancement

For example, the Canadian sport fishery off the west coast of Vancouver Island has grown tremendously since treaty ratification. Where this fishery once caught some 30,000 chinook, it is now taking 200,000, with about 60 percent estimated to be of U.S. origin. A similar increase has occurred in British Columbia's coho sport fishery. In spite of these dramatic increases, the Canadians do not count these fish against their harvest ceilings!

Although the Canadian take of Columbia River salmon will be an important negotiating issue, perhaps a greater problem is the Alaska fishery. Many salmon stocks, including the Columbia's, migrate north to the Gulf of Alaska during their years at sea, and Alaskan fishers are major interceptors of these salmon.

For some stocks, Alaskans and Canadians catch far more southern U.S. salmon than vice-versa.

In spite of the obvious need to protect these weak chinook stocks and to more aggressively pursue coastwide chinook rebuilding, Alaska will undoubtedly balk at further harvest restrictions and even press for a higher catch.

Alaska's desire for a higher catch is based partly on pressure from an expanding and highly lucrative sport fishing industry and partly on the state's successful fish hatcheries and other enhancement programs. The Alaskan industry feels that harvest restrictions to protect weak stocks such as the Columbia's are preventing its members from enjoying enhancement benefits.

Yet, because of successful enhancement, the Alaska fishery caught more chinook in 1991 than before the treaty was signed. In contrast, tribal and non-Indian harvests on the Columbia River have dropped.

—Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

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## Pen-raised coho salmon prepare for spring release

**YOUNGS BAY** — Near the mouth of the Columbia River, some 1.5 million juvenile coho salmon began their quest for life last November in a series of net pens at Tide Point.

The young salmon, trucked from the McKenzie Hatchery on the banks of the McKenzie River near Springfield, are the most important part of the Youngs Bay fisheries project.

"This particular net pen project is different," says Jim Hill, director of the Youngs Bay project sponsored by the Clatsop Economic Development Council and the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. "When people hear the words, 'net pen,' the majority envision a facility where fish are grown in the net pen to

maturity for harvest.

"Ours isn't like that. We grow the fish in the net pens until they smolt and are ready for the ocean. The rest of their growth is put on outside the net pen when they are in the open ocean. We're a non-profit organization, so the benefits come when the fishermen start catching the fish and generate dollars rippling through the community," Hill says.

Unlike closed conditions in a hatchery, the net pens are flushed daily by the incoming tides which bring in food from the sea to supplement the feed provided by the human staff. The fish will double in size over the next six or seven months before being released.

When the salmon are released this

May, they'll make their way to the nearby Pacific, where they'll mature and hopefully return to Youngs Bay in the fall of 1994, becoming part of the off-shore fisheries, the Buoy 10 sport catch and the increasingly-important Youngs Bay gillnet harvest.

Last autumn, the Youngs Bay project was given a \$400,000 grant from the Bonneville Power Administration to purchase 40 additional net pens at Tide Point, to bring the total to 70.

Although net pens, which acclimate young salmon to new water conditions, have been in place at Tide Point since 1987, this is the first time the young fish have been held throughout the winter, Hill said.



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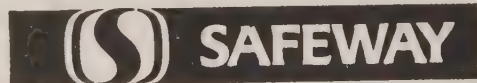
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# Things are tough all over

**California's tuna industry feeling the pinch of foreign competition**

"What we are fighting for here is survival of an American culture," says Charles F. Woodhouse, president of MariFarms Inc., parent company of Pan Pacific Seafoods, the owner of the last remaining tuna processing cannery still operating in the continental United States.

For decades thousands of cannery workers, donning sparkling white uniforms, rode on ferries from San Pedro to Terminal Island near Los Angeles to work at the nearly twenty tuna canneries in place along the bustling harbor. The work was hard, but steady.

"It was really something to see," said Steve Edney of the United Industrial Workers Union, who remembers seeing the Terminal Island workers march to work in their uniforms every morning before dawn almost parade-like. The American tuna processing industry, which traces its roots to the turn of the century, came of age at Terminal Island during the 1950s and 1960s, with some 18 canneries providing about 17,000 jobs during the heyday.

Today, America's roller-coaster economy has turned the birthplace of the nation's tuna-canning industry into the place where Edney and others fear it will also die.

The last decade has seen a devastating combination of foreign competition that includes much lower wages paid abroad, U.S. trade policies and several other factors which have broken the back of the industry. Huge, once-bustling canneries are being boarded-up, putting thousands of workers and commercial fishermen out of work.

Only one tuna-processing cannery remains open today in the continental USA — Pan Pacific's facility on Terminal Island which employs some 650 — but many say it is only a matter of time before even it succumbs to the same harsh economic pressures that have claimed so many other mainland tuna canning operations, including Astoria's own Elmore Cannery operated by Bumble Bee Seafoods until the early 1980s. Cheaper foreign labor was simply too tempting for the company to resist.

"We need help, and no one seems to be listening," says Edney.

Just as the plight of other fishing industries has gone virtually unnoticed by mainstream American media, consumers, business leaders and politicians, the fading tuna industry may be running out of time.

"If we represented hundreds of thousands of jobs like the airline or automobile industries, our situation

would be front-page news every day," says Kevin Dolan, Pan Pacific president. But despite years of petitioning Congress and the International Trade Commission, the tuna industry and the unions representing its workers have been unable to draw attention.

Although the industry's decline has its historical roots in a World War II trade agreement between the United States and Iceland, it was not until years later that the tariffs created by that pact began to spell trouble for the American tuna industry. These import tariffs not only set different rates for oil-packed and water-packed tuna, but were also far lower than the 24 percent import fees imposed by European countries.

American tuna canneries managed to successfully compete for years, but as the health-conscious switched to water-packed tuna in the 1970s, the 6 percent import tariffs on foreign water-packed tuna, compared with 35 percent for oil-packed tuna, led nations such as Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines to flood the USA with their lower-priced products.

The tariffs, combined with much lower wages abroad, (35 to 50 cents abroad compared with an \$8 to \$10 hourly wage in the USA) quickly took their toll on American companies. Between 1980 and 1985, 11 mainland American tuna canneries closed their doors.

Star-Kist, one of the largest operators on Terminal Island, took some 5,000 local jobs to Puerto Rico and American Samoa when its big tuna plant closed in 1988.

Bumble Bee, the nation's #2 producer of canned tuna, closed its San Diego plant in 1983, opening a new one in Puerto Rico. When U.S. canneries began closing, the tuna industry began calling on the government to impose the same 24 percent import tariffs that have been in place in Europe for years.

"Everybody is for free trade," says Dolan, yet U.S. officials remain reluctant to fiddle with tariffs and senate committees continue to study the industry in its decline.

Pan Pacific, which was losing \$300,000 a month in 1990, is now turning a profit, thanks to forgone management pay raises and worker wage freezes, but union officials and those still working in the industry worry that they may be running out of time to save the last of America's mainland tuna canneries.

"Everybody's worried. That's all they can do," says Lucy Garcia, 65, who has worked at the Terminal Island canneries for nearly 50 years. "We're the last ones."



## "Remember us..."

It is night, and my husband and I are drifting in our gillnet boat the Floozie. We are fishing for salmon on the Columbia River, perhaps for the last time.

Because of endangered species listings of Snake River stocks, the likelihood of our being able to fish healthy runs of salmon, which return to the Columbia intermixed with the endangered runs, diminishes each season.

We fall to reminiscing about past years, past seasons.

"Do you remember when we fished at Three Tree Point, when the snowflakes were the size of silver dollars, drifting down in the hush and disappearing in the black water?"

"Do you remember when we saw the fawn drinking from the river in Duncan's Cove? Do you remember when we found the stoneware beer bottle dating from the 1860s, lying on the beach at Bayview, in perfect condition?"

We have it still, along with other fishing memorabilia: the sailmaker's kit, the two stoves, the needles and mesh boards made by Great-Grandpa.

The Fishermen's Union pennant flaps suddenly overhead in a twist of wind. To us, the gillnet is a tool, a tool on which time and effort are spent. The possibility that all of the tradition, the knowledge so carefully learned and painstakingly applied for so many years, will become obsolete is terrifying. Honesty and honor, however, leave no choice but to face that fear fully.

"Do you remember when we launched the Floozie? Do you remember the cherry tree that blooms each year in Turner's Canyon?"

"Do you remember the custom and companionship of so many years of go-

ing out together on the last day of the season to catch fish for giving away?"

"Do you remember that faded poem in Swedish, given to Great-Grandmother on her wedding day, the day she left Sweden, never to return?"

Trying to understand this fishing life is like grasping a salmon. So solid, so substantial, and when you just think you have it firmly in your hand, it slips away and skates across the deck. And still we chase it, foolish but determined, searching always for rhythm in seasons, in customs, in boats, in gear, in the past, the present, but not possible without the future.

"Fishdark" is that time at dusk when fish are rising and moving. If it is raining, the pilots call it "Raindark." If it is not raining, the sun goes down in reds and purples, and the water turns from bright blue to dark blue, steel blue, gold, green-gray and, finally, black. All these colors are approximations, for the water gives color the qualities of clarity and subtlety that are beyond our language's capacity to describe.

We start the engine and wind in the net. A salmon comes aboard, with its watermelon smell. When the drift is done, we turn the boat upriver and head for home.

"Do you remember the August nights on the Willapa, watching the shooting stars? Do you remember watching storms chase each other across Bristol Bay, so that it seemed that we were spinning with the universe?"

"Do you remember — oh, do you remember the day when our daughters launched balloons from the boat, laughing in their delight as they let them go in the breeze?"

And so we go drifting at fishdark.

Remember us.

—Irene Martin

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## Roberts not swayed by timber interests, shelves report

*The governor sends the forestry dept. back to the drawing board on streamside logging regulations*

SALEM — Encouraging a cautious approach, Oregon Gov. Barbara Roberts backed away from approving stream protection rules favored by the timber industry, instead sending the Oregon Board of Forestry back to the drawing board this spring.

In its effort to revise rules for streamside logging and roadbuilding practices on state and private lands as ordered by the 1991 Legislature, the board has been working toward a policy for the past 15 months. The timber industry, pushing for less restrictive rules, appeared to have swayed the board into recommending the least restrictive package, but eighteen fisheries and conservation groups wrote and urged Roberts to step in.

Without the governor's intervention, they warned, the board was poised to approve rules that would further violate state water quality standards and further reduce watershed productivity, driving more wild salmon and trout stocks toward extinction.

Roberts says the Forest Practices Act amendments passed in 1991 "Set strong direction to the board to revise forest practices rules because of continued concern about impacts of forest practices on our streams and resulting impacts on fish and wildlife resources."

But many critics say the act didn't go far enough to really protect fish and aquatic habitat. "I've seen lots of situations where loggers have come in and clear-cut, and left a small stand of unprotected trees alongside a stream. Then, during winter windstorms, they all get blown down, leaving the stream directly exposed to the harsh effects of the sun," says one advocate of Roberts' decision. "I've seen entire water supplies dry up completely."

Now, the board staff will appoint a citizen's steering committee to gather more technical data on how logging affects streams and fish, as well as complete an economic analysis of the effects and draft new rule recommendations, possibly by as early as this fall.

"The rules you ultimately adopt must achieve significant, not merely incremen-

tal, improvements in riparian habitat protection, particularly where they will impact species on the edge of extinction," Roberts wrote. "I realize that our base of knowledge is nowhere near perfect," she added.

"But that does not preclude making significant strides based on existing science, and I believe we have an obligation to do so," Roberts concludes.

Ann Squier, Roberts' natural resources aide, told the board that the governor has committed herself to fisheries protection by asking the Legislature for some \$10 million to begin habitat restoration pro-

jects on the southern Oregon coast and the Grande Ronde Basin of northeastern Oregon.

Squier said the governor would make no specific recommendations about how much stream protection is enough, but added, "It is clear that there is enough difference of opinion that it would not be advisable to move ahead without more technical review."

But Mike Burrill, a White City mill owner and Forestry Board member, said stricter stream protection regulations would cost the timber industry some \$500 million.



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## Whiting becoming a valuable resource

continued from page 14

plants. The frozen blocks of whiting as well as surimi are used as raw materials by secondary manufacturers who turn them into a variety of seafood-based products.

"The long-term goal is to attract these secondary processors to locate on the Oregon coast where they will have access to a large, stable supply of whiting," said Sylvia.

But before any of these dreams could come about, some serious problems with the quality of whiting had to be solved.

"When whiting die, their flesh turns to mush unless the fish are chilled to near freezing and processed within a few hours," says John Bragg, fishing industry writer.

"The Pacific whiting is different than any other fish. Pollock or rockfish can be kept on ice for several days and still retain their quality. But after three days on ice, more than 50 percent of whiting develop soft texture defects," Morrissey said.

What causes the flesh to soften is an enzyme known as protease in the flesh of the whiting. The enzyme does not present the same problem for at-sea processing because the delay between catching and processing is minimized. In order for a shore-based whiting industry to succeed, some way had to be found to resolve the soft texture problem.

"We knew it was connected with temperature and time. Whiting has to be cooled to near freezing and kept there or the flesh will go bad. And the longer the fish sit around, even on ice, the worse they get," Morrissey said.

He and Sylvia received a \$100,000 grant from the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Center for Applied Agricultural Research and the Oregon Trawl Commission to investigate quality guidelines that would allow trawlers to land whiting onshore. The staff at the seafood laboratory began testing whiting that had been caught and landed under various time and temperature conditions.

Based on their findings, they recommended a number of practices to ensure the quality of the whiting brought to shore plants. They advised day trips, so fish could be delivered within 6-18 hours after bringing the fish aboard. They also stressed the importance of cooling the

fish immediately to near freezing and constantly monitoring the temperature.

"The time limitations give trawlers time to make two separate tows with their net, bringing in from 40,000 to 60,000 pounds with each tow. That's less than trawlers are capable of bringing to port in one trip, but they make it up by making several trips a week," said Morrissey.

The handling and care required to bring quality whiting to shore also involved a new way of doing business for fishermen and processors. "Boats have to catch, refrigerate and deliver within strict time limits. Processors have to offload and process quickly. Boats can't come in at the same time. Everything has to be scheduled," says Sylvia.

Surimi, or rather the price of it, helped hasten the establishment of Oregon's shoreside whiting industry. In 1991, the price jumped from 80 cents to \$2 a pound. Until then, most observers assumed whiting processed on shore would be sold in various frozen forms and the transition into surimi, because it involved considerable investment, would be more gradual.

"The price of surimi caused shore-based whiting to occur much faster than we thought," said Morrissey. The laboratory strengthened its surimi research capability by bringing in two new food scientists, Haejung An, who specializes in seafood biotechnology, and Jae Park, who spent several years with the largest North American producer of surimi seafood.

Research on surimi and whiting was not new to the Seafood Laboratory. Dave Crawford, Morrissey's predecessor as director, was one of the first researchers in the United States to apply food grade inhibitors at the final stage of the surimi process to stop the action of the protease enzyme.

"Without the discovery of protease inhibitors, it would have been impossible to make acceptable market-quality surimi from whiting," Morrissey said.

Several different materials derived from animal or plant sources are used as inhibitors, including beef plasma protein, egg whites and potato starch extract.

The laboratory investigators began making batches of surimi from whiting that had undergone a variety of post-

catch time and temperature conditions. Their aim was to determine how long whiting could be out of the water and the flesh temperature that had to be maintained in order to make quality surimi.

Their findings reinforced their earlier conclusions about post-catch handling of whiting intended for fresh or frozen products. The greater the care and attention given to post-catch time and temperature recommendations, the higher the quality of surimi that resulted.

The recommendation, while appearing simple, puts considerable pressure on the fishing endeavor because of the huge amount of fish — 40 to 50 tons — each vessel catches on a one-day trip. A delay at any point in the process raises the risk that the final product, whether fresh, frozen or surimi, may not meet market quality standards.

In addition to time and temperature considerations, the researchers wanted to determine the effect the enzyme inhibitor would have on what is called the "gel strength" of the surimi. When surimi is heated, it forms a gel that is elastic and has a texture similar to cooked crab. The strength of this gel is measured by a torsion test in which a small piece of the gel is twisted until it breaks.

Findings indicate that protease inhibitors not only allowed the production of higher grades of surimi, but actually improved the gel strength.

Research on whiting and surimi is far from over at the Seafood Laboratory. In-

*Continued on page 35*



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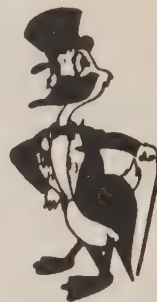
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The use of fish wheels was prohibited by Oregon law in 1926, and by Washington law in 1934. Construction of Bonneville and The Dalles dams inundated them.

When fish wheels were outlawed, Frank Seufert painted a sign on his barn roof which read, "To build this business it took 47 years. The initiative law of Oregon destroyed it in one day." Seufert, whose family business also canned fruits and vegetables as well as fish, died a millionaire in 1929 at the age of 76. Frank Warren, from the Warren family of fish wheels, perished in 1912 while sailing home from Europe on the *Titanic*.

Although now just memories, fish wheels will long remain a colorful part of Columbia River history.

*—Portions taken from Fish Wheels of the Columbia, by Ivan Donaldson  
and Frederick Cramer, Portland, Oregon, 1971.*

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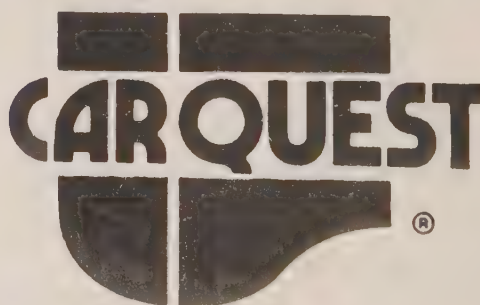


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The 1993 gillnet boat races will be held this summer along the Astoria waterfront during the annual Astoria Regatta the week of August 11-15.

A \$1,000 grand prize and a challenge cup sponsored by former professional Grand Prix racer David Riswick promises to make this year's event even grander than last year.

Specific rules and classifications will be announced at a later date.

The winner of last year's gillnet race was Mike Tarabochia, in his twin-engined *Michael Jay*.



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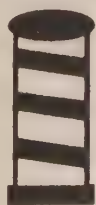
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## Fisheries department says coho numbers overestimated

An inaccurate, outdated method of counting fish is being blamed for the overestimation of wild coho stocks by the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

Last year, the department estimated there were some 109,000 spawning coho "silver" salmon in our coastal streams and lakes, but a new in-house study suggests that those numbers were well off the mark.

The study says that just 32,300 wild coho actually made their way back to spawn in Oregon's rivers in 1991, while only 16,500 returned the year before.

"We're dangerously close to a fundamental conservation crisis, much closer than we thought we were. Every coastal stream where we have an index in prime spawning habitat is way below goal," says Jim Martin, fisheries department chief.

The new counting method, taken from a series of five-year studies by the fisheries department, increases the number of streams from which fish are counted, and selects them at random rather than taking the count from the same streams each year as has been done since the 1950s.

For years fish surveyors have concentrated on streams where they knew there were salmon, and always came back to the same stream areas (just 1 percent of all coastal tributaries) year after year.

The alarmingly low estimate of coastal coho has biologists concerned, especially as they had previously thought that wild coho comprised some one-quarter of the coho in the Pacific. Now they discover that the true number may be less than 10 percent of the total population, and the way salmon has been managed in the Northwest will never be the same.

Throw this in the pot with all the other con-

tentions fishermen are currently dealing with and it really spells trouble.

"The habitat management community should see what's happened with the spotted owl and murrelet and with salmon in the Columbia River, and say we don't want that, Martin says. "We don't want these stocks to get to the point where that kind of lockup happens."

Unlike other species of salmon, coho spawn in winter, and then spend a full year or more in the tributary streams before heading to the ocean. This makes them particularly vulnerable to the poor spawning conditions which greet them at many creeks and tributaries along the way.

A 1991 report by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (which sets commercial fishing seasons off the Oregon, California and Washington coasts) determined that coho have been overfished in the ocean long before they make it to freshwater. It cited three basic problems that contribute to the decline of wild coho stocks: poor ocean conditions (predators, water temperature, etc.); poor river habitat (including streamside logging practices) and hatcheries.

The report also said that from every 100 adult hatchery fish that return from the Pacific, only 10 are necessary to provide the eggs for hatchery reproduction. The remaining 90 may be harvested. But to ensure reproduction from a group of 100 wild silvers, some 40-50 fish would have to return from the ocean to spawn.

Still, the wild coho which spawn annually in Oregon's coastal streams make up the largest surviving wild coho population in the United States, outside of Alaska. Yet conservation groups such as the Oregon Natural Re-

sources Council are urging a total ban on coho fishing, as well as an endangered species listing from the federal government.

But the National Marine Fisheries Service, which decides whether to list fish species as threatened or endangered, is not convinced a coho listing would be the right thing to do. "We are literally swamped with the work that's before us now," said Merritt Tuttle, an endangered species coordinator for the agency. "We are getting additional staff, but those are totally committed to addressing the petitions that we're now dealing with."

Oregon currently tries to manage the coho so enough wild fish return to spawning streams, but that means that many hatchery fish, bred to be caught and harvested, return to the hatchery as excess.

"We've managed the Columbia River under a strategy of essentially writing off wild fish to optimize the value and benefits of hatchery fish," Martin said. "We regarded it as a conservation trade-off, that we would really focus on conservation management of the coastal stocks and recognize that Columbia River [wild] stocks would be hit much harder."

"This is a time of reckoning for all those years of decisions we made when we thought we could have it all," Martin adds. "These fish don't have long. They don't have forever for us to fumble around in a social exercise."

But fishermen, both sport and commercial, defend the hatcheries, saying they produce a badly needed influx of revenue from fish sales and tourists who want to go fishing. Scott Boley, a Gold Beach troll fisherman who sits on the fishery management council, says repeated cuts in ocean harvests have dwindled their profits but have done little to help the wild coho.

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**Squawfish reward program sets record** — The 1992 Northern Squawfish sport reward fishing season sponsored by the Bonneville Power Administration closed at the end of September with record catches.

More than 184,280 squawfish were caught by anglers between May 18 and September 27, some 26,000 more than was caught in the 1991 project. About 88,000 fishermen participated in the fishery, up from the 67,000 who fished in 1991.

Early reports indicate that this year's program was successful in curbing the Columbia River system squawfish population by about 10-12 percent. Biologists say that this could reduce the number of young salmon smolts taken by the voracious predator by as much as 50 percent. Fishermen received \$3 for each squawfish 11 inches or longer caught on the Columbia between Longview, Wash. and Lewiston, Idaho.

Meanwhile, eight anglers were arrested and charged with fishing outside the boundaries of the official Columbia River Sport Reward System last fall. Federal charges of conspiracy, making false statements and defrauding the federal government were filed against the eight, all federal felons.

Capt. Bob Zak, regional enforcement officer from the Washington Dept. of Wildlife in Vancouver, said the suspects had been under surveillance throughout last summer when a routine bag check by a department officer revealed squawfish which had been caught at the mouth of the Chelan River, some 100 miles north of the boundary at Priest Rapids Dam.

One of the suspects told the agent she was fishing for pet food.

**Japanese will fight ban on whaling** — The Japanese government has launched an aggressive national advertising campaign to fight a global ban on whaling, stating that Japan is tired of taking it on the chin from "eco-fascists" and "whale groupies."

Touting the virtues of consuming whale meat, a reported media blitz of Japanese government-sponsored commercials claim the meat can cure human ailments from asthma to skin rashes.

Tokyo is pushing hard to persuade the International Whaling Commission, which holds its annual meeting in May, to rescind a 6-year-old moratorium on commercial whaling and permit the Japanese to continue to kill a limited number of the more abundant whale species.

"Japanese are not crazy advocates of killing whales into extinction," said Toshiyuke Motohashi, head of a fishing cooperative in the town of Taiji, once the nation's leading whale port. "But there is strong scientific evidence that certain species of whale can be caught in a regulated manner without any danger of extinction," he said.

Japan wants to be allowed to kill some 1,000 minke whales each year, a small species which appears to remain relatively plentiful, but environmental groups such as Greenpeace say the Japanese are not dependent on the practice, as they were after World War II, and that it should be stopped on moral grounds.

"The slaughter of these animals is just a disgrace, and I can't believe it is allowed to continue in this day and age," said one member of Greenpeace. "This is one tradition that needs to be stopped before all the whales are gone forever."

**Deschutes County asks for study of dam** — Deschutes County officials and the Bend Metro Park and Recreation District are urging that a detailed environmental study be required of Pacific Power & Light Co. in its bid for relicensing of its 83-year-old powerhouse and dam on the Deschutes River.

Mirror Pond, a popular 40-acre reservoir behind the dam which has become a focal point for the Bend/Redmond area, has a substantial silt buildup problem, and must be dredged periodically.

Safety and environmental concerns have been raised by the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and various conservation groups which question the structural integrity of the 83-year-old dam and the effect silt has on fish and fish passage.

Although Clark S tre of Pacific Power & Light says there are no anadromous fish in this section of the Deschutes River, "There are a lot of diversions above and below our project. Any effort related to fish would work in a very small section of the river, although some agencies are concerned about the fish," he says.

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## Waves

like the dinosaurs, but with many pleasant memories to those who knew them.

"Corking" is the term used for laying your net directly in front of another already in the river, a practice frowned upon as not the proper thing to do. A family fisherman friend from Aberdeen was inclined to that habit and his sons followed suit. But once the biter got bit! His younger son corked the old man! With his failing eyesight, the father looked and glared. "Is it Willie? By God, it is Willie!" Cast thy bread upon the waters!

In the days of sailboat fishing, cooking was done in a flat metal pan with raised edges, filled with sand. Wood was used as fuel, later the primus kerosene stove filled the bill.

Just upriver from Pt. Ellice was a small cove called "Hungry Harbor." Dad would point out the boats anchored there and jokingly remark that those were the guys who had mean wives at home.

Lunch buckets usually held enough for the whole week for two men. A group of gillnetters ran for shelter and anchored in Hungry Harbor during a sudden strong southwesterly storm. Unable to cross the river until the storm abated, their food ran out, and they were pretty hungry before they reached Astoria.

Some interesting statistics for 1909 from the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries show the combined catches of purse seines, fish

traps, haul seines and fish wheels for salmon were 8,563,674 pounds, and 7,538,750 pounds of steelhead. Of the total catches, 88% were steelhead.

The gillnet catches of floater and diver nets for salmon were 14,188,645 pounds. Steelhead caught by gillnet totalled 600,273 pounds.

My father's records from 1899, with the years 1900 through 1903 missing and commencing with 1904 through 1909 show deliveries totalling 80,098 pounds of salmon, and steelhead deliveries of only 357 pounds, less than .05 percent of the total catch.

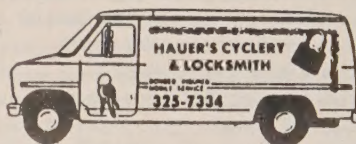
The sportsman and steelhead organiza-

tions claims of destruction of the steelhead runs seem a bit feeble, with regards to the gillnetters. They now claim as a divine right, in the name of conservation, Columbia River salmon for sole recreational purposes, as they have successfully done with the steelhead.

In England and Scotland, fishing rights are the sole property of the Lairds and their wealthy guests. In Germany, it's the sole privilege of the titled and wealthy barons and vons.

Are Columbia River sportsmen next on the list?

—from an original story by  
George O. Carlson



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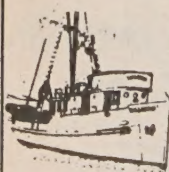
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## Whiting

vestigations are continuing into the effects of different vessel refrigeration systems on whiting quality and whether the amount of fish caught in each sweep of the trawl net causes undesirable bruising. They also want to find out if there are seasonal variations in whiting quality.

Perhaps most significant, they have begun research that represents the next step in the economic development of the whiting industry. In July 1992, the Seafood Laboratory received a grant of \$115,000 in state lottery funds to develop value-added products made from Pacific whiting.

Early in the development of the West Coast whiting fishery, the question of who would get to harvest it, at-sea or shore-based interests, was viewed as an either-or

proposition. There was some basis for that viewpoint in the use-it-or-lose-it provisions of federal law, which require that preference be given to U.S. fishing interests who can demonstrate a capacity to use the fish.

As recently as 1990, shore-based plants couldn't show such a capability, and no doubt the weight of the law supplied the motivation for them to catch up with the offshore proponents with utmost speed. But as the whiting industry evolves, it is obvious that in the future, the two sides will share the catch.

For Gil Sylvia, the important thing is that the shore-based fishermen have a guaranteed opportunity to catch whiting. "We need a secure supply over a long period, otherwise processors and secondary manufactur-

ers won't risk the investment in new plants and equipment," he said.

For the local ports, the shore-based whiting fishery means there will be regular fish landings from April through November, providing steady employment. For the trawl fleet, a guaranteed share of the harvest will provide a much-needed alternative to catching other species that have already suffered from being heavily fished.

For the university, some long-term investments in research are paying off. And for the private sector, state government and the research community, the vision of a whiting industry on the Oregon coast is becoming a reality.

—Tom Gentle, communications specialist  
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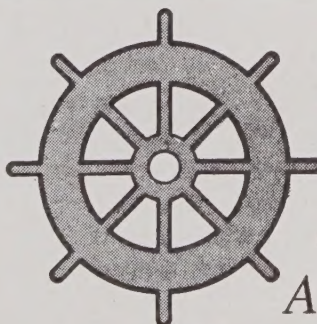
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## It's not a snag, it's a submarine!

An 88-foot Warrenton-based fishing vessel had a close encounter early this spring when its net tow cable became entangled with a naval submarine which strongly dragged the vessel backward at a 40-degree list.

"It makes you think about a land job," said Frank Oxford, skipper of the *Capt. Frank*, which was fishing for rock cod with a 3-man crew about 20 miles south of the Canadian border. "We're lucky to be here."

Apparently, a submarine became entangled with the fishing boat's tow cable attached to its net, and began to drag the *Capt. Frank* backward at a 15-knot clip. Luckily, the cable snapped when it reached the end of the reel.

Master Chief John Caffey at the Naval Submarine Base Bangor in Silverdale, Wash, confirmed that there was a submarine operating in the area.

## The Owl has it!



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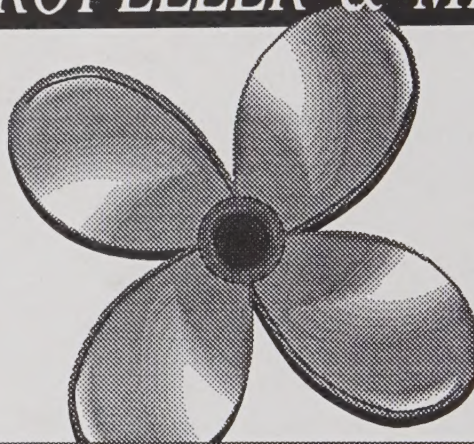
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